

MINUTES
BALTIMORE County Linking Communities To The Montreal Process
Criteria And Indicators PROJECT

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, September 7, 2004
Oregon Ridge Nature Center Library

Attending:

Bud Chrismer (Baltimore County Recreation & Parks); Charlie Conklin (Gunpowder Valley Conservancy); Clark Howells (Baltimore City); Jeff Horan, Christine Conn, Rob Prenger; Bob Ackerman, Pat Patterson (MD DNR); Scott Kurtzman (Glatfelter Pulpwood Co.); Dan McConaughy (Land owner); Mel Noland (Baltimore County Forestry Board); Shawn Peabody (citizen); Len Wrabel (Mar-Len Environmental); Don Outen, Pat Cornman, Rob Hirsch (DEPRM).

Welcome and Agenda Review:

Don Outen opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. and welcomed all the participants. The agenda for this meeting included:

- Announcements and updates
- Status Reports from the sub-committee working groups

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the July 6th meeting were not available for approval because of a delay in their preparation. Don also requested the sub-committee minutes for posting on the web-site.

Announcements and Updates:

Don presented a number of announcements and updates, and discussion followed as indicated:

1. **Leaf Litter** - Biohabitats, Inc, produces a quarterly newsletter, *Leaf Litter*. The current issue is dedicated to forest restoration.
2. **Sudden Oak Death** - The USDA has produced a new fact sheet on sudden oak death, *Phytophthora ramorum*. For a copy, go to <http://www.ncpmc.org/sod>.
3. **Forest Sustainability Issues Paper and Resolution** - As of this time, the project has not been discussed with the County Executive. The document has been reviewed by DEPRM Director David Carroll, and a meeting with the Executive will be scheduled soon. Options for adoption could include an Executive Order or a County Council Resolution.
4. **Prettyboy Watershed Alliance** - The Alliance has received a grant to conduct educational outreach about forest stewardship for landowners in the Prettyboy Watershed. The group held a focus meeting recently, and is studying a

Pennsylvania model for Woodlot Owners' Associations. Don reported that the County is looking at forest patches and ownership patterns and will share data with the PWA for their project. The management of fragmented forest patches is exacerbated when the patches are comprised of multiple parcels and ownerships.

5. **Grants Awards** – DEPRM has been awarded grants for two projects under the 2004 Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants program administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The projects include:

- ❑ ***Rural Residential Stewardship Initiative*** – The goal of this project is to develop and pilot a project to educate smaller-lot (3-6 acres or so) rural residential landowners about their roles as managers of common forest and stream systems. Objectives include providing educational outreach to landowners about the value of good stewardship practices, including reforestation of forest fragments, suppression of exotic, invasive species, the disposal of pet and garden wastes, fertilizer and pesticide use, and good management responses to infestations and fire. Additionally, the project will provide technical support to plan and implement stewardship projects that may involve the installation or expansion of forest stream buffers.

DEPRM will partner with the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy and the Greater Baltimore Group of the Sierra Club to identify potential sites for five pilot projects, with a goal to reforest at least 25 total acres.

- ❑ ***Growing Home Campaign*** – This project has the goal of increasing urban tree cover in Baltimore County neighborhoods, estimated at about half the desirable cover, and encouraging the use of native species through market incentives. Components of the project include educational outreach to homeowners about the benefits of planting native trees, guidance in species selection, planting, and maintenance, and incentives through the distribution of \$10 discount coupons for the purchase of native trees of at least \$25 in value. DEPRM will partner with retail nurseries, garden centers, and home improvement centers, reimbursing businesses \$5 for each redeemed coupon.

This project will generate up to \$100,000 in coupons, with \$50,000 underwritten by the County, and an equal sum matched by retailer discounts. Homeowners will also invest at least \$150,000 (\$15/tree) toward the planting of 10,000 trees

6. **Water Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) for the Prettyboy Watershed** - At DNR's request, Baltimore County has submitted a WRAS application for the Prettboy Reservoir Watershed. The Trust for Public Land also submitted a grant request under the EPA's Regional Geographic Initiative program, which could potentially provide up to \$150,000 for outreach programs for forest land owners.
7. **State of the Watersheds Conference** – Baltimore County and Baltimore City are celebrating their continuing partnership in the Watershed Agreement, originally

signed in October, 2002, by again bringing together citizens and watershed associations for a briefing on the status of progress. A significant update is that the Gwynns Falls Watershed Plan has been completed. This year's conference will also focus on reservoir watersheds and forest management. The conference is to be held on Saturday, November 20, at the Notre Dame College of MD on Charles St. in Baltimore.

8. **Strategic Forest lands Assessment (SFLA)** - Using data from the state's Green Infrastructure Assessment, the DNR has completed a SFLA that examines forest resources statewide via three different models: economic value, ecological value, and a vulnerability assessment. Christine Conn informed the group that the SFLA document is on-line. Jeff Horan reported that DNR (Jeff Horan, Christine Conn, Pat Patterson, Anne Hairston-Strang) and DEPRM (Don Outen, Rob Hirsch, Pat Cornman) met on September 2 to discuss using Baltimore County as one of two case studies for applying the Assessment at the County level. At that meeting, DEPRM expressed interest in conducting a sensitivity analysis of the models, which would include using the same model and weighting but with local data where available, varying the model weighting, and potentially changing the model. The DNR has asked DEPRM to help the effort by preparing specific questions pertinent to the needs of Baltimore County, and DEPRM requested more detail about the model parameters. Don added that this type of effort will enable the targeting of projects to the County's needs and will add value to the Montreal Process implementation.
9. **Quadrennial Rezoning** - Don reported that the Comprehensive Zoning Map Process was completed last week, when the County Council took final action on more than 500 zoning petitions affecting about 90,000 acres of land. There were significant changes to Resource Conservation (R.C.) zoning in the reservoir watersheds, which will help control development pressure, thereby protecting drinking water, forests, and agricultural lands. Baltimore City lands around the reservoirs were down-zoned from RC4 to RC7; however, the City is exempt from County zoning regulations. Other reservoir lands not petitioned by watershed groups were submitted by members of the Planning Board. Some acreage was down-zoned from R.C.4 to R.C.6; and significant acreage was changed to R.C.8. It is our understanding that, in the private sector, subdivisions already in progress were grandfathered. For comparison with this year's tallies, which are not ready yet, Don reported that in the reservoir watersheds, 9,000 acres underwent changes in 1996, and in 2000, the total acreage affected was 12,000 acres.

Jeff Horan congratulated DEPRM for providing significant data for the rezoning process. Don remarked that for all residential development, the existing (2000) zoning capacity would have allowed about double the cumulative number of improved residentially-assessed properties (over 10,000 units in the Loch Raven reservoir watershed, 1,300 units in Prettyboy, and 1,100 units in Liberty). This would undoubtedly have affected the rate of forest fragmentation in forest patches, which

are already small (the average is 14.5 acres). Don also reported that the Carroll County development rate is three times that in Baltimore County.

Reports of the Sub-committees

Indicators Sub-committee

The Indicators group is looking at using management questions being developed for the cooperative EPA-DNR-DEPRM project on environmental indicators, which is a demonstration of applying EPA's Regional Vulnerability Assessment (ReVA) at the State and County scales. Don and Rob Hirsch are also planning to re-crunch DEPRM's forest patch and relevant watershed data.

Pat Cornman is working on preparing an RFP for forest assessment of major County lands. Jeff Horan offered DNR help in the RFP preparation by sending the methodology for the Continuous Forest Inventory following U.S. Forest Service methods to Pat.

Charlie Conklin suggested that DEPRM could also look at easements. Data extracted from the Forest Conservation Regulatory Program could also be used. Don offered that forest assessments for easement properties might be a subject for later study if funding were made available. Jeff Horan indicated that the DNR might be able to provide DEPRM some assistance in looking at easements; however, it was noted that the state data is at a coarser level than that of the County.

Don mentioned that there was some discussion in the County about the feasibility of acquiring digital development plan data from developers' consulting firms, which reportedly use CAD systems to design developments. This data would allow efficient capture of environmental features resulting from the regulatory process, such as stream buffers and forest conservation areas. Don referred to a previous DEPRM Owings Mills study in which data from development plans for about a 2,000 acre area were compiled to assess impact of development on forest cover.

Economic Sustainability Sub-committee

Rob Hirsch reported that a major topic of discussion in the group's third meeting, on August 31, was the development of an educational outreach approach, as a way to address a key issue in Criterion 2: Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystems. Mel Noland volunteered the Forestry Board to talk to the Baltimore County Department of Education about the loss of forestry education in the current science curriculum, what can be done to reintroduce the subject, and pertinent changes to state requirements that would insure the reintroduction of forestry topics into the classroom. Mel also brought a number of DNR and Forestry Board education brochures for the group's benefit, and will determine if any are available in digital format. He also spoke about the popularity of the Forestry Board's website, as measured by the Baltimore County Public Library, and plans to improve the content to attract more visitors.

Scott Kurtzman introduced a discussion about targeting forest landowners for the educational outreach effort. He called for determining the extent of economically sustainable forest product land in the County, and a determination of the minimum forest patch size for sustainable economic use of forestry. He asked if forest patch size would be utilized to target landowners or if the educational effort would be applied to all forest owners or all landowners? Similarly, should the educational effort be applied to everyone, but indicator data collected for only the largest forest patches? With additional discussion, the workgroup agreed that answers to these questions should precede the development of the educational program, as well as the collection of indicator data.

The sub-committee then developed a draft of the workplan for the education in forest products and the forest product industry issue of Criterion 2: Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystems.

A brief outline of the workplan issues assessment follows. A detailed account can be found in the sub-committee's meeting minutes for August 31.

Issue Assessment:

1. A landowner survey and preparation of a database on forestland ownership. Jeff Horan remarked that the survey could dovetail with the Forest Inventory Analysis, which has a format that the workgroup should consider. He also suggested that the Forestry Board and SCD could serve as partners in the effort.
2. A survey of public and institutional land managers about their forestry policies and practices. The survey could be designed to address multiple issues and indicators or to focus upon issues specific to productive capacity, as it related to economic sustainability.
3. A forestry educational approach for K through 12th grades in the public schools. None of the outdoor education centers are dedicated for public school fieldtrips. Indicators might include tracking the number of visitors to these facilities. Mel Noland suggested partnering with the Chesapeake Bay Trust and possibly Pennsylvania agencies or programs.
4. Prepare GIS database from existing management plans on file at the Cub Hill Ranger Station.
5. Gather all existing educational materials on forestry topics, including hard copy pamphlets and brochures, and web site materials. Track the number distributed each year as an indicator. Request lesson plans on forestry topics, if available.

Issues Goal (Rough draft)

To increase understanding in the general population, but especially in owners of large forest patches, about forestry practices, forest products, and the ecological and economic value of management for specific objectives vs. no management and neglect.

Strategies to effect change:

1. Advertising in print media and internet
2. Focus educational efforts on owners of forests with capability for sustainable yields of forest products.
3. Educate children about forestry.

Recommended Actions:

1. Assess actual and potential forest product production in the County, and utilize the data to tailor the educational materials and effort.
2. Assemble existing educational materials and transfer information to the website, when possible.
3. Mail fliers about economic productivity of forest lands to forest owners.
4. Plan follow-up meetings with institutions and landowners.
5. Improve forestry education for grades K through 12 .

Issue Coordinators

Sub-committee members chose other high-priority issues for which they agreed to be coordinators. They are as follows:

Scott Kurtzman

Criterion 7 – Legal, Institutional, and Economic Framework

Issue: Public and private ability and willingness to manage forest lands.

Rob Prenger

Criterion 6 – Long-term Multiple Socio-economic Benefits

Issue: Timber harvest is not a major economic factor in Baltimore County, but management, including cutting, may be important for forest health.

Rob Hirsch

Criterion 2 – Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystem

Issue: Education

Christine Conn

Criterion 5 – Global Carbon Cycle

Issue: We don't know enough about carbon credit programs.

Ecological Sustainability Sub-committee

Pat Cornman reported that the workgroup is having trouble holding meetings, either as a group or on Steering Committee meeting days. Part of the difficulty derives from the scattering of committee members in and out of state. At the last meeting, scheduled for August 3, only Pat and Charlie Conklin attended.

Even so, progress in researching the issues continues. Early in the sub-committee's existence, members discussed the criteria and indicators, choosing the following to research:

Criterion 1 – Biological Diversity,
Criterion 3 – Maintenance of Forest Ecosystem Health and Vitality, and
Criterion 4 – Soil and Water Resources.

We noticed that several of the indicators for Criterion 3 might also be applied to Criterion 2, Productive Capacity of Forest Ecosystems, but with an emphasis on ecological services produced by a healthy forest ecosystem.

In a subsequent meeting, workgroup members were asked to choose one or more criteria for which they had the most interest. The group divided the criteria as follows:

Criteria 1 and 3 – Pat Cornman
Criterion 2 – Ecological aspects – Len Wrabel and Lucy Wright
Criterion 3 – Pat Cornman, Jeff Wolinski, Charlie Davis and Lucy Wright
Criterion 4 – Christine Duce and Jeff Wolinski

To date, the sub-committee has produced the first draft of a workplan for Criterion 1 – Biological Diversity. Pat is continuing to refine the workplan, which has overlapping issues with and applications to the exotic, invasive species indicators of Criterion 3. Charlie Davis, who cannot typically attend sub-committee meetings and Don have given Pat valuable reviews of the draft workplan and recommendations for improving its content.

Specifically, Charlie Davis observed that the recommended actions go only to the planning stage and do not include a strategy for accomplishing the goal. He also suggested the development of a handbook for land management strategy, referring to Objective #3 in the EIPAS workplan, which calls for amendments to existing County development regulations to require the suppression of EIPAS in the preparation and maintenance of sites for mitigation plantings. The focus of the handbook would be to emphasize the need to match planting and management plans to site vulnerabilities concerning EIPAS.

Charlie Conklin reported that he has received a database from Christine Duce on forest conservation management agreements, and is seeking input from the workgroup on the fields that are most pertinent to Criterion 3.

Lucy Wright is working on the educational aspects of Criterion 2, as they relate to ecological productivity. In another overlapping effort, Len Wrabel is researching the social, economic, and scientific principles for achieving vigorous forest ecosystems over long time periods to provide for local and regional biological diversity and ecological services in addition to the production of forest product resources for the marketplace.

Christine Duce is concentrating on soils and Jeff Wolinski on stream systems issues contained in Criterion 4.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m. and sub-committee members then met briefly to discuss their continuing work.